

CONFIDENTIAL

20 May 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Subject: Monitoring of news services by FBIB

1. In compliance with your suggestion, ICAPS has considered the advisability of FBIB continuing to monitor AP news services and make confidential distribution to member intelligence agencies despite AP's disapproval.

2. This monitoring service intercepts a private Morse code broadcast from AP stations located abroad intended for the reception of subscribers to the AP local service. Information received from the CIG General Counsel reveals a Federal Communications Commission decision that such interceptions are in violation of international agreements, but there appears to be no precedent to determine whether a government activity is included in this restriction. It is understood that most governments of first class powers do engage in similar monitoring services, and furthermore there is a provision whereby a government is empowered to stop such press services if they are prejudicial to government interests. It therefore would appear extremely unlikely that the continuance of this monitoring service would result in lawsuits. However, it is quite possible that it might cause unfavorable criticism which CIG can ill afford at this time if dissemination is made of the product.

3. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Assistant Director for Operations be instructed to restrict the distribution of this monitoring service to internal CIG requirements, and that ICAPS be authorized to initiate the canvassing of member agencies to determine the ability and willingness of member agencies to subscribe to the AP local service.

DONALD NEWMAN
Chief, ICAPS

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